

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM PARIS DTD 17 FEB 1978 QTE

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TAGS: MNUC PK FR US

SUBJ: US-FRENCH DISCUSSIONS ON PAKISTAN REPROCESSING  
DEAL

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 1397; (B) STATE 019295

1. SUMMARY: ON FEB 15 AMBASSADOR SMITH MET WITH MFA  
NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION ADVISOR ANDRE JACOMET AND,  
AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS, HAD A LENGTHY DISCUSSION ON THE  
CURRENT SITUATION AND FRENCH INTENTIONS REGARDING THE  
PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT. JACOMET PLANS TO GO TO  
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PAKISTAN BEGINNING FEB 17; HE IS THINKING OF  
PROPOSING FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY PAKISTAN OF THE  
FRENCH SUGGESTED COPROCESSING ARRANGEMENT AND IF THAT  
IS NOT ACCEPTED, HE IS CONSIDERING SUGGESTING AN  
"APPARENT COPROCESSING" ARRANGEMENT (BASIC PLANT DESIGN  
AS ORIGINALLY CONTRACTED PLUS AN ADD-ON WHICH WOULD MIX  
PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM). JACOMET SOUGHT US VIEWS ON THIS  
APPROACH AND SMITH NOTED THAT COPROCESSING IS CERTAINLY  
NOT THE BEST SOLUTION IN US VIEW AND THAT THE  
"APPARENT COPROCESSING" WOULD BE LESS ATTRACTIVE;  
SMITH SAID THE US HOPES FOR COMPLETE CANCELLATION.  
JACOMET PRESSED FOR POSSIBLE US ASSISTANCE TO FRENCH

BUSINESS IN PAKISTAN IF THE PLANT IS CANCELLED; SMITH SAID CANCELLATION WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE THINGS EASIER. JACOMET AGAIN REFERRED TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER OF AUGUST 24, 1976 TO PRESIDENT GISCARD. END SUMMARY.

2. PREPARATIONS FOR THE FEB 15 MEETING, DESCRIBED BY JACOMET TO EMBOFF A FEW DAYS PRIOR, INCLUDED A SMALL LUNCHEON (4-6 PEOPLE) WITH GUIRINGAUD, SOUTOU, JACOMET AND SMITH DESIGNED TO AFFORD AN INTIMATE, IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF THE PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT PROBLEM. SHOULD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS BE WARRANTED, ACCORDING TO JACOMET, ONE-HALF HOUR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE LUNCH WOULD BE AVAILABLE ON THE MINISTER'S SCHEDULE TO COMPLETE ANY SENSITIVE ISSUES REMAINING. MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD HOSTED A VERY PLEASANT LUNCHEON, BUT THERE WERE 12 PEOPLE AND NO DISCUSSION OF THE PAKISTAN ISSUE. AFTER LUNCH, THE MINISTER AND SOUTOU EXCUSED THEMSELVES AND JACOMET, SMITH AND EMBOFF HAD AN INTERESTING ONE-HALF HOUR DISCUSSION ON THE PAKISTAN REPROCESSING ISSUE.

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3. JACOMET BEGAN BY NOTING THAT HE BELIEVED HE WELL UNDERSTOOD PRESIDENT GISCARD'S VIEWS ON THE PROJECT -- THAT FRANCE DOES NOT WANT TO BE IN A POSITION OF BEING A CONTRIBUTOR TO PAKISTAN GAINING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON, PRESSURES ARE MOUNTING IN PARIS FROM MANY QUARTERS TO SETTLE THE MATTER. A LARGE PORTION OF THE PRESSURE STEMS FROM THE APPARENT MOUNTING CANCELLATION CHARGES THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT FACES. THERE IS ALSO PRESSURE FROM THE COMMERCIALLY ORIENTED SECTOR OF THE GOF WHICH ARGUES FOR COMPLETION OF THE CONTRACT AS GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICE AND, SINCE SUFFICIENT BLUE PRINTS AND TECHNICAL ADVICE HAD ALREADY FLOWED TO PAKISTAN, PAKISTAN COULD PROBABLY COMPLETE THE PLANT ON ITS OWN. JACOMET ADDED THAT THIS LATTER ASPECT BROUGHT WITH IT THE ARGUMENT THAT IF PAKISTAN WERE TO COMPLETE THE PLANT ON ITS OWN, IT WOULD NOT BE OBLIGED TO HAVE SAFEGUARDS.

4. JACOMET THEN NOTED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY SPENT A FULL DAY WITH THE CEA BEING BRIEFED ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH PROPOSAL OF COPROCESSING. HE INDICATED THAT CEA WAS NOW TELLING HIM THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE 20 MILLION FRENCH FRANCS AND FOUR YEARS TO COMPLETE THE DESIGN AND DEMONSTRATE THE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE COPROCESSING PROCEDURE. AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH, WHICH JACOMET INDICATED CEA HAD PROPOSED, IS A SO-CALLED "APPARENT COPROCESSING", CONSISTING OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGN OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT PLUS AN ADD-ON SECTION AT THE END WHICH WOULD FORCE THE REMIXING OF THE

PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM AND APPARENTLY NOT PERMIT THE INDEPENDENT EXTRACTION OF PURE PLUTONIUM. THIS "APPARENT COPROCESSING" PROCESS WOULD REQUIRE 10 MILLION FRANCS AND 18 TO 24 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

5. JACOMET STATED THAT HE WAS PLANNING TO GO TO PAKISTAN ON FEB 17 OR 18 AND REMAIN APPROXIMATELY ONE SECRET

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WEEK. HE INDICATED THAT HIS TASK WAS TO KEEP THINGS FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND AND TO GIVE HIS GOVERNMENT FURTHER TIME. HE SAID THAT HIS APPROACH WOULD BE TO REQUEST THE GOP TO LOOK AGAIN AT THE COPROCESSING PROPOSAL. IF THIS WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN ANY WAY TO THE GOP, HE WOULD THEN PROPOSE THE "APPARENT COPROCESSING" APPROACH. JACOMET SAID HE FELT THIS ALTERNATIVE PROCESS COULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO PAKISTAN AND IF SUCCESSFUL COULD MEET HIS PRESIDENT'S OBJECTIVE -- THAT FRANCE NOT BE THE CONTRIBUTOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. HE HOPED THAT THIS COMPROMISE WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO PAKISTAN TO PUT OFF ANY IMMEDIATE CONFRONTATION AND THAT INITIAL STUDY OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD CONSUME TIME. HE ASKED AMBASSADOR SMITH HOW THE US MIGHT VIEW SUCH AN APPROACH.

6. AMBASSADOR SMITH POINTED OUT THAT COPROCESSING WAS CERTAINLY NOT, IN THE US VIEW, THE BEST SOLUTION IN PAKISTAN; THE US HOPE IS FOR COMPLETE CANCELLATION OF THE PLANT. WHILE COPROCESSING IS NOT ATTRACTIVE TO THE US, THE "APPARENT COPROCESSING" BRIEFLY DESCRIBED BY JACOMET WOULD CERTAINLY BE LESS ATTRACTIVE TO THE US. AMBASSADOR SMITH NOTED THAT THE US WAS FULLY COOPERATING WITH FRANCE IN DELAYING UNTIL LATE MARCH THE FINAL GOF ACTION ON THIS PLANT; THE US WOULD NOT PROCEED DURING THAT PERIOD WITH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND IT WOULD KEEP THE PRESSURE ON PAKISTAN TO GIVE UP THE PLANT. AMBASSADOR SMITH SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED SHOULD ANY FORM OF REPROCESSING PLANT BE COMPLETED IN PAKISTAN AS THE GLENN AMENDMENT WOULD MOST LIKELY BECOME EFFECTIVE IF EITHER THE COPROCESSING OR THE "APPARENT COPROCESSING" APPROACHES WERE FOLLOWED. SECRET

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7. AMBASSADOR SMITH SAID THAT THE US WAS SYMPATHETIC TO GOF EFFORTS TO SUCCESSFULLY DELAY UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS ITS FINAL ACTION ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT; HOWEVER, AT THAT POINT, THE US FULLY EXPECTS CANCELLATION OF THE PLANT. AMBASSADOR SMITH NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE HAD UNDERSTOOD AND

APPLAUDED THE FRENCH DECISION TO PROCEED WITH THE CANCELLATION OF THE PLANT. IF THERE SHOULD NOW BE A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THAT PLAN AND IF SOME FORM OF REPROCESSING PLANT WAS TO GO FORWARD IN PAKISTAN, THE AMBASSADOR CONTINUED, IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE A DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR US OFFICIALS TO SWALLOW.

8. JACOMET IMPLIED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE US POSITION AND OUR CONCERNS REGARDING THE AVAILABILITY OF PLUTONIUM IN PAKISTAN. AMBASSADOR SMITH SAID HE CERTAINLY DID NOT ENVY JACOMET WITH THE DIFFICULTY OF HIS TRIP TO PAKISTAN. SMITH SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS JACOMET CONSIDER POSTPONING HIS TRIP. JACOMET FOUND THIS SUGGESTION CERTAINLY ATTRACTIVE BUT HE DID NOT GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD THE LIBERTY TO FURTHER POSTPONE HIS TRIP. HIS TICKET WAS IN HIS POCKET AND HE WAS MAKING LAST MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS TO GO.

9. JACOMET THEN RAISED THE MATTER OF GENERAL FRENCH ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN PAKISTAN AND NOTED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER IN HIS LETTER OF AUGUST 24, 1976 TO PRESIDENT GISCARD REPORTING HIS RECENT TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO ON NUCLEAR MATTERS, SAID THAT HE HAD MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO BHUTTO: (A) PAKISTAN MIGHT PURCHASE FROM FRANCE FACILITIES SUCH AS LIGHT WATER REACTORS AND A FUEL FABRICATION PLANT WHICH WOULD HELP MEET PAKISTAN'S ENERGY NEEDS WITHOUT PROLIFERATION RISK; AND (B) THAT IF THESE PURCHASES (FROM FRANCE) SHOULD ENCOUNTER FINANCING DIFFICULTIES, THE US WOULD BE PREPARED TO BE  
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OF ASSISTANCE. JACOMET EXTRACTED FROM THIS REFERENCE THE SENSE OF US ASSISTANCE TO FRENCH BUSINESS IN PAKISTAN AND ASKED IF THE REPROCESSING PLANT WERE CANCELLED, WOULD THE US ASSIST FRENCH EFFORTS IN OBTAINING BUSINESS IN PAKISTAN. AMBASSADOR SMITH RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT IT WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE THINGS EASIER.

10. DURING THE DISCUSSION THE SUBJECT OF BRAZIL WAS BRIEFLY COVERED. AMBASSADOR SMITH SET FORTH USG VIEWS CONTAINED IN STATE 029304. THESE COMMENTS HAD BEEN BRIEFLY RELAYED ON FEB 10 BY AMBASSADOR HARTMAN TO MR. SOUTOU. JACOMET SOUGHT TO UNDERSTAND THE US POSITION BUT DID NOT PURSUE THE ISSUE; HE SEES IT AS CLOSELY RELATED MATTER TO THE PAKISTAN REPROCESSING ISSUE BUT NOT AN INTEGRAL PART.

11. COMMENT: JACOMET'S FAILURE IN HIS EFFORTS TO SURROUND AMBASSADOR SMITH AND HIMSELF WITH GUIRINGAUD AND SOUTOU AND THE APPARENT LACK OF INTEREST IN CEA IN FURTHER PURSUING A COPROCESSING APPROACH HELP PAINT A

PICTURE OF JACOMET HAVING BEEN HANDED THE HOT POTATO  
OF THE PAKISTAN REPROCESSING PLANT WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO  
KEEP IT FROM BECOMING A PUBLIC ISSUE UNTIL AFTER  
ELECTIONS. THE "APPARENT COPROCESSING" APPROACH OFFERS  
A WEAK POTENTIAL FOR DIFFUSING PAKISTAN'S  
DISGRUNTLEMENT ON THE CURRENT FREEZE IN THE SHIPMENT  
OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE PLANT. IT IS A SIGNIFICANT  
DEPARTURE FROM THE APPARENT FRENCH CONVICTION NOT TO  
PERMIT THE AVAILABILITY OF PURE PLUTONIUM IN PAKISTAN.  
PERHAPS SUCH AN APPROACH WILL SERVE BASIC FRENCH  
INTERESTS, WHICH SEEM TO BE MORE AND MORE FOCUSED ON  
GETTING PAST THE MID-MARCH ELECTIONS WITHOUT  
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SIGNIFICANT FLARE-UPS ON THIS SUBJECT.

12. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS TO ISLAMABAD AND TO VIENNA  
USIAEA FOR AMBASSADOR SMITH AS THIS CABLE WAS PREPARED  
AFTER HE LEFT PARIS. MYERSON UNQTE VANCE

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